

THE SOUTH DAKOTA REHABILITATION CENTER FOR THE BLIND

Mission Statement

The South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind provides assessment and training to individuals with disabilities so they may enhance their independence in their home, work, and community.

The South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (SDRC) is located in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. All programs are administered and staffed by the Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired a division of the South Dakota Department of Human Services.

SDRC's purpose is to provide learning opportunities through various programs to assist individuals with disabilities to overcome barriers to personal fulfillment; whether these barriers are physical, vocational, attitudinal, or social. We teach independent living skills and preparations for employment.

For more information contact: SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind, 2900 West 11th Street Ste. 101, Sioux Falls, SD 57104, (605) 367-5260 or 1-800-658-5441.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind is located in Sioux Falls. Our neighborhood is comprised of residential and retail businesses.

Consumers who participate in evaluation/training at SDRC must be referred by a Rehabilitation Counselor or Rehabilitation Teacher from SD Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired. Out of state referrals are also accepted into the program when referred by your Rehabilitation Counselor. Apartments are available for people who live outside of Sioux Falls.

SKILLS OF BLINDNESS PROGRAM

The skills of blindness training at SDRC includes communications and Braille, computers with assistive technology, home management, orientation and mobility, home mechanics, crafts, personal counseling, group counseling, diabetes education, recreation and other life skills activities.

This program consists of individualized training for persons whose visual impairment is creating functional limitations in their daily lives. Services are identified and provided via teaching and counseling in such a manner to assist the individual in achieving their highest level of independence.

Each person in training has regular progress meetings with staff and referral source to report progress, set goals, and project further training needs. Upon completion of training, students return to their homes to utilize the skills learned in their everyday lives.

COMMUNICATIONS

The ability to communicate is a vital part of daily life. Students learn to identify coins by touch and fold bills for identification. Writing guides may be used for writing checks, writing letters, addressing envelopes, or signing their names.

Telling time through the use of a Braille, talking or low vision watch or clock is also a valuable skill. Students will try all methods to see which will be the most functional for them.

All students are exposed to Braille which has many uses in addition to reading books and writing letters. Students find Braille valuable for keeping phone numbers, making lists for reminders, marking food items, writing and reading

recipes, address books, and labels for binders/folders in a work setting, as well as many daily needs. Students also learn several different methods of writing Braille including the use of a slate and stylus, Braillewriter or electronic note taker.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR COMPUTERS

SDRC offers computer training, which will enable individuals who are blind or visually impaired to efficiently operate a computer with assistive technology. Students are evaluated to determine their current level of computer knowledge as well as their current knowledge of assistive technology. Recommendations for specific assistive technology devices are determined, and students are trained in the efficient use of screen readers, screen magnification programs, personal note takers, and refreshable Braille.

Students are trained in the efficient use of assistive technology with an emphasis on specific programs they need to utilize. Individual needs and abilities are carefully considered in the development and implementation of individual training plans.

HOME MANAGEMENT

Home Management training increases independent living skills of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Training is individualized to each person's needs and abilities. Skills taught in Home Management include meal preparation, shopping, cleaning, sewing, clothing care, personal care, labeling, and home mechanics.

Students practice various skills such as meal preparations, food handling and housecleaning. Cleaning patterns are taught to insure efficiency and thoroughness in cleaning all surfaces. Hand sewing is taught so minor clothing repairs can be made. Advanced sewing skills are taught, including machine sewing, if the student is interested.

ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY

Orientation and Mobility is training in skills needed to travel safely and independently without sight or with limited sight. Orientation is the skill used to keep track of where a person is in their environment and where they are going. Mobility includes the skills and tools to travel safely. Various ways of using the long cane are taught at the Rehabilitation Center. Use of public transportation is taught as most students want to learn to use buses and taxis for independence.

Most of the lessons are taught outdoors in residential areas and later in commercial areas. Students need to dress for the weather as lessons take place in all kinds of

weather conditions. Orientation and Mobility is taught in real environments where people would normally walk. Lessons increase in difficulty as learning progresses. Most students feel more confident in all areas of their life as they learn to travel safely.

HOME MECHANICS AND CRAFTS

Home Mechanics includes learning the skills for simple indoor and outdoor home repairs and maintenance. Students can gain hands-on experiences in simple repairs and projects.

The Rehabilitation Center also offers a complete crafts area. Students work on craft projects using alternative techniques. Popular crafts include: ceramics, leather crafts, woodworking, knitting, and sewing. Overall, therapeutic skills training is very important and can develop into support and friendships with other students.

RECREATION AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Students plan group outings for recreational activities during their stay. Some of the activities include eating in restaurants, tours, bowling, table games, picnics, baseball games, and a wide variety of other indoor and outdoor activities which encourage participation in the community.

COUNSELING

One-on-one counseling addresses individual needs of those who are experiencing vision loss. This may include working through accepting and acknowledging feelings and emotions which are affected by the loss of vision.

Group counseling is another tool that helps individuals with vision loss adjust to their circumstances related to loss of vision. The group setting provides an environment for individuals to share their feelings regarding blindness or vision loss as well as coping mechanisms that have been helpful.

LENGTH OF TRAINING

The evaluation period allows staff to determine and evaluate your needs and together develop a plan of goals and objectives. Evaluations typically range from several days to two weeks. Individualized plans are written to include goals and

objectives based on each person's unique needs. The goals and objectives demonstrate each person's individual's progression and duration of training.

GUIDELINES

- Behavior that results in physical, verbal abuse or deliberate aggression toward yourself or others will not be tolerated.
- Infringement on anyone's rights, space or property (such as harassment) is not allowed.
- No weapons are allowed on the premises.
- Smoking is permitted outside the building in a designated area.
- Breaks are to be taken in the multipurpose room or outside of the building.
- Computer usage is only allowed during your designated computer class time. No one is allowed in the computer lab without a teacher present.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory during the duration of a training plan. Unexcused absences will be reported to the referring Rehabilitation Counselor or Rehabilitation Teacher and may result in termination of training. If you are going to be late or absent you need to call or notify the center by 8:15 a.m. on the day of scheduled training.

MEALS

Meals are not provided at SDRC. Individuals should bring sack lunches. Microwaves, pop machine and refrigerator are available in the multi-purpose room for lunch and break times.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation during training is available through local taxi, bus service, Para-transit or private arrangements. Transportation costs will be addressed by the referring counselor or teacher.

OTHER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Diabetic Education

Diabetes is a leading cause of blindness in adults. Specialized services are available at SDRC to help individuals who are blind and visually impaired learn alternative methods for diabetes management.

With training in the use of specialized equipment, a person with blindness can accurately and safely monitor their blood sugar levels. Special services, products, and techniques are utilized to prepare a blind or visually impaired person to accurately measure insulin and take medications as prescribed. Adaptive methods are taught to assist in the treatment of diabetes complications. With diabetic education, guidance, and support a person can become confident in their diabetic management skills.

Low Vision Exam

The low vision clinic at SDRC helps consumers find adaptive equipment to continue working or living independently. We have the most up-to-date equipment for testing to prescribe magnifying devices to help optimize your vision for near and distance viewing.

A low vision evaluation can determine distance and clarity of vision, the size of readable print, the existence of reduced visual fields, lack of contrast sensitivity, and lighting requirements for optimal vision. The exam includes a patient history, assessing of client goals, testing for refractive error, evaluation of the eye, and exploring the magnification needs and goals of the consumer.

Deaf-Blind

With limited or no access to the sights, sounds, conversations, and interactions of the environment, you can imagine the difficulty deaf-blind people have in traveling around town, completing everyday tasks, working, and interacting with others. The Deaf-Blind Specialist works to improve the quality of life for people who are deaf-blind. Some assistance may include, but are not limited to: seeking the right devices compatible with the dual sensory losses, assistance with job development, providing information and training to others about the unique needs of individuals who are deaf-blind

SBVI provides specialized deaf-blind services to current consumers by utilizing a deaf-blind specialist who is specifically trained in this area

WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU

Items below are needed if you are staying in one of the SD Rehabilitation Center's training apartments:

- Backpack or carrying bag
- Seasonal clothing
 - Winter (heavy coat, boots, gloves/mittens, hat scarf and walking shoes for indoors)
 - Summer (shorts, lightweight shirts, sun visors, water bottle, walking shoes and sun screen)
- Tissues
- Emergency contact information
- Medical insurance card(s) Medicaid, Medicare or other
- Complete list of doctors' names, address, and phone numbers.
- Complete list of medications (doses & times).
- Medications if needed during the day.
- Covered coffee mug
- Low vision devices (e.g. magnifiers, sunshades)
- Personal Hygiene items (bath soap, toothbrush, deodorant and other misc. personal items)
- Prepaid phone card
- Breakfast, lunch, and supper for 2-3 days
- Lunch box
- Coffee, tea, or soft drinks
- Mug with spill proof lid
- Pillows
- Spices (salt, pepper, seasonings)

Provided:

- Vacuum Cleaner and bags
- Bath Towels and washcloths
- Kitchen towels and dishcloths
- Cleaning supplies
- At least one roll of toilet paper
- Cable TV and VCR (you may bring a DVD player)
- Bedding (sheets, 1 blanket and comforter)
- Water glasses, plates, pots, and pans
- Computer for training
- Telephone with local calls only

SOUTH DAKOTA VOCATIONAL RESOURCES

South Dakota Vocational Resources is a specialized employment program within SDRC. This unit works closely with counselors from the Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Division of Rehabilitation Services to help individuals with disabilities find and engage in gainful employment. Although this unit specializes in working with people who are blind or visually impaired, we also provide employment services to individuals with other disabilities.

EMPLOYMENT SKILLS

Employment Skills Training provides individualized services to people with a variety of abilities. Individuals are referred from Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, Rehabilitation Services, the school districts, or other appropriate sources. A qualified instructor evaluates the consumer's work habits and vocational skills so appropriate job matches can be made in the future. Emphasis is placed on having the individual meet the employer expectations of dependability, punctuality, following directions, getting along with co-workers, stamina, motivation, and proper grooming. This program helps to identify strengths and limitations which may be factors in obtaining and retaining employment.

Job search strategies, job retention skills, and self-esteem building exercises are included in individualized or group discussions. Specialized accommodations are available to evaluate computer skills, as well as various work tasks to prepare individuals for employment.

JOB PLACEMENT

Job Placement and other support services are available through South Dakota Vocational Resources.

Employment Consultants provide training in interviewing and other job seeking or job retention skills. They discuss and evaluate each individual's current level of skills and needs. An individualized job-seeking plan is then developed which includes identification of current and potential job openings, training in interviewing skills, and resume development.

Job coaching is provided "on site" to teach individuals duties of the specific job, build self-confidence, and establish natural supports in the work place. SD Vocational Resources Employment Consultants maintain regular contact with employers and individuals to reinforce and stabilize the job placement.